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DEPT FOR AIAG
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TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [SENV](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [KSCA](#) [CM](#)
SUBJECT: CAMEROON AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE: DESPITE
IMPROVEMENT, GOV'T PREPAREDNESS WANTING

REF: YAOUNDE 608

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11. (SBU) Summary. The Government of Cameroon's interministerial committee (CIM, French acronym) for avian influenza (AI) is better poised to respond to an AI outbreak than it was last year, due to substantial training and assistance from USAID, NAMRU-3 (reftel), CDC, APHIS and others, including assistance from the EU and China. The government (GRC) now has an approved quarterly work plan to disburse funds and a guidebook for the work planning process following UNDP operating procedures. The EU-funded PACE surveillance program is shutting down, however, and the GRC appears more focused on pursuing funding than on providing an effective response capability. Despite these extensive preparations and some improvements, the GRC does not appear sufficiently prepared and well-positioned to respond effectively to an emergency outbreak. End summary.

Recent Progress

12. (U) Poloff attended the CIM steering committee meeting at the Prime Minister's office on July 26 and later met separately with Steve Nakashima (the AI coordinator for the UNDP's AI Common Fund) to discuss current funding and progress of AI-related activities. EU representative Philippe Jacques also attended the CIM meeting. There is now an approved quarterly work plan that allows disbursement of funds to ministries, and the GRC has approved a guidebook for the work planning process following UNDP operating procedures. In addition, a number of positive steps have improved the GRC's response capability. MINSANTE (the Public Health Ministry) has completed its training program at the provincial level, and MINEPIA (the Veterinary Ministry) has completed training in the South, Southwest, North and Extreme North provinces. A Cameroonian team also attended a CDC workshop in Dakar. UNDP conducted a journalism workshop in February with some materials from UNICEF, and the GRC's AI-specific communications unit has upgraded its technology and is developing a website. However, a planned GPS outbreak mapping project never materialized. Following a summer hiatus, Nakashima is planning to resume coordination with USAID of training and shipment of commodities in the coming months.

Funding Issues

13. (SBU) Although there is a national plan of action in place, it is in need of revision. Additionally, the EU-funded PACE surveillance program is in the process of shutting down. Although the GRC would like to see the program continue, it does not want to fund it. According to Nakashima, the CIM president is unhappy with the lack of government support, and will pursue this matter in another technical secretariat meeting. Although the funding issue should have been addressed in 2006, according to Nakashima, the GRC was counting on an AI outbreak that would trigger a fresh inpouring of international assistance. Disagreements persist over funding, according to Nakashima. The CIM submitted budget requests that could cover all epizootic disease activities rather than those activities specific to AI, he said. Although the GRC was expected to pick up the operating cost of the PACE program after four years, it is now asking the Common Fund to pick up the entire operating cost. Nakashima is concerned that once Common Fund monies are disbursed, the GRC will simply request additional money rather than covering expenses from its own budget.

Comment: Despite Some Improvements
Ability to Respond Remains Limited

14. (SBU) Although the GRC is in better shape now than it was previously, due to substantial training and assistance from USAID, NAMRU-3 (reftel), CDC, APHIS and others, including assistance from the EU and China, it has a tendency to view international AI funding as an entitlement to bankroll government programs, rather than as emergency assistance. Furthermore, despite a preoccupation with protocol, the GRC

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struggles to fulfill routine administrative requirements, such as the submission of detailed assistance requests and timely reporting documents needed for the disbursement of funds. While considerable training has been completed, an effective plan of action does not yet exist. Despite these extensive preparations and some improvements, the GRC does not appear sufficiently prepared and well-positioned to respond effectively to an emergency outbreak. End Comment.
NELSON